

# ***REINCARNATION***

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## *THE BLOOM OF CHARACTER*

Through countless lives the great *I* of each man gathers stores of experience in the small round of facts of human existence. In an equal number of excarnate periods—as does the wandering, marauding bee—he feeds upon his stores.

The character, at first like the frailest seedling, grows to sapling strength, puts forth strong boughs, gives shelter to minor beings and lends grace to our view of God. Men see the growth and rounding of character.

Finally it blooms, to send perfume to all beings. This happens when the soul begins to know itself, sees the true purpose of existence and dedicates itself to be forever at one with the ever-blooming Tree of Life.

W. V-H.

### THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Look at the world of life! There men live under the dark clouds of their own karma of errors and of wilful wrongs done to others, all throughout long periods of time. They live under pressure, under necessity, driven about by forces of nature which they themselves in their ignorance augment. Some of these forces are those of desires and passions, hardly human but suggesting the instincts of the animal life out of which was formed the lower life of our present humanity. And yet many men find a heightened life in entering into these desires and calling them their very own,—nay sometimes feeling that they *are* their passions and desires.

There is a stage in the evolution of humanity,—and the great majority is still in this stage,—when all of their actions are directed outward into the three worlds in which they live,—the physical, astral and mental. Their energies are used for selfish purposes, or at least with the interests of the personality kept in mind. These pass out into nature, remaining in the worlds in which they were formed, and after various changes they return as karmic reactions upon those who sent them forth.

What a chaos this engenders! What blind hates, griefs, despairs! For the selfishness of men is a destructive force. It is even self-destructive in its effects. And in that fact lies the hope of salvation for mankind. No man can continue to use destructive energies for a long time without having them return to him and hindering his baleful work. The man who works



evil upon his fellows will reap a harvest of evil reactions which will make him suffer and wear away his evil desires in pain.

Even those men who work with thoughts instead of desires may do so selfishly. And thus the mental atmosphere of our planet-ball is heavily charged with thoughts that limit and compress men's freedom of thought, because they are untrue thoughts. All energies which are sent out in their own world, be it physical, astral or mental, will return and react upon the senders. But before that time these energies may influence other men and clash with those other thoughts that are antagonistic to them, so that a war of thoughts may take place.

It is in these conflicts in the unseen worlds subtler matter that many of the dark karmic clouds are neutralised. There must come a time, there always does come a time, when the strain in nature between the opposing tendencies becomes too great and a re-adjustment takes place. Many thought-forms of evil are thus shattered by their own destructive interactions and collisions, and the energy stored up in them is released in more subtler form; it is freed so that it may be used again, perhaps in better ways.

When thus the unseen airs have been cleared of their heavy cloud-masses, there shines out the "light of the world," the light that is found in every human heart. It is the divine light and it belongs to men as their birthright, for they are a part of the One. It is the only light that can guide men in their evolving. It shines always, but the clouds may hide it for a time.

C. S.

## KNOWLEDGE AND CHANGING OF KARMA

In the life of every one of us who aspires to serve, the time invariably comes when his attention is called to the contrast between his highest aspirations and his surroundings—with all the obligations toward persons and things that the word “surroundings” assumes if taken in its biological and ontological meaning.

Some feel the entanglement of their ideal duty, or dharma, of their present existence so overwhelming, that even at the very threshold of the sanctuary they turn their eyes back, and then the opportunity is lost, as Eurydice disappears forever in the myth of Orpheus.

Some, with a very definite mystic temperament, do not question their place in the Sun, and make all effort to see that every part of their dharma may be dynamic and harmonious with the rhythm of the universe, as it is eventually attained by the raptures of their souls. Very soon the world becomes to them no more than an illusion, and their practical life merges wholly into asceticism.

Some, with the definite marks of the occult line of development, walk amid the struggles and storms of life as victors appointed by Destiny. “No fires of earthly origin can fan into a flame any of their senses or desires; no human voice can find response in their souls, except the great cry of Humanity.”

To continue with the words of H. P. B. in *Practical Occultism*, “There are ‘natural born magicians,’ Mystics and Occultists by birth, and by right of direct inheritance from a series of incarnations and æons of suffering and failures.”



"These only may be certain of success. But they can be met only far and wide, and they pass through the narrow gates of Occultism because they carry no personal luggage of human transitory sentiments along with them." "Not so with those who have to carry yet for several incarnations the burdens of sins committed in previous lives, and even in their present existence." And it is among these last that we—that is, the great majority of us—are proceeding, according to the resultant action of our past efforts, along one or the other of the two lines of spiritual evolution.

Those with mystic tendency—by the refined sensitiveness of their nature—are induced to see in the materiality of their surroundings the reflection of the Divine Aspect as paramount. So the contrast with such materialities is much less of an obstacle in their way, and they sweetly and piously surrender themselves to that stream of life, into which their natural karma has placed them. Joy puts their souls in a "state of grace." Pain finds in them that resignation which is the response to the secret harmony of the universe; while sacrifice finds always open the door of their hearts.

But their danger is great. In the words of H. P. B. again, the danger is "that of being irresistibly dragged from the impersonal divine state, down to the lower planes of matter." "The Dead Sea fruit assumes the most glorious mystic appearance, only to turn to ashes on the lips and gall in the heart." "And once being mistaken and having acted on their mistakes, most men shrink from realizing their error, and thus descend deeper and deeper into the mire."

For those who start to approach the path of the Occultist, the feeling of resistance in the system of forces of their surroundings is immediate and restless. Once they have acquired the mathematical habit of putting immediately the mark + or — to every part of the system, the sense of ambiguity is never possible, even for an instant, in their consciousness. Their own consciousness is, in its resultant, itself a part in that system with its own definite algebraical mark. The incessant successive combinations of it with the surroundings is always an algebraical operation, in which neither opinion nor sentiment can any more have a place. For either the immediate synthesis of the right combination, or the ineffacable pain of the wrong one, is the certain result. And herein lies the danger: "The aspirant has to choose absolutely between the life of the world and the life of Occultism. It is useless and vain to endeavor to unite the two, for no one can serve two Masters and satisfy both. No one can serve his body and the higher soul, and do his family duty and his universal duty, without depriving either the one or the other of its rights." "It would be a ceaseless, a maddening struggle for almost any married man, who would pursue true practical Occultism, instead of its theoretical philosophy."

Well, let us not forget, when those pages were written: "We are in the Kali-Yuga," H. P. B. told us then, "and its fatal influence is a thousand-fold more powerful in the West than it is in the East; hence the easy preys made by the Powers of the Age of Darkness in this cyclic struggle." Things are much better now, in spite



of the Great War—nay, I personally believe, actually better because of it. The Chief Officer of our *Legion* has always insisted upon the “great cleaning-up of the astral world” which has taken place since the time of H. P. B., and which is constantly going on even at this very moment.

Apart from this, is there then no safe method by which the aspirant can remain a man of the world and yet really enter the preparation for the Occult life? Yes. That depends entirely upon the actual knowledge of our karma, and this may be one of the aspects of the Delphic warning: “Man, Know Thyself.”

How, then, may we attain this knowledge? Through service—even long before we have heard about the Divine Wisdom or Occultism in this present existence. We must not care for a detailed knowledge of our karma. We know that at a certain point of our present existence we have made a decision which was confirmed by an inner feeling of certainty, of occult reality, of a particular yet unutterable character, unknown ever before to our own consciousness. This is the only necessary knowledge of our karma, and we get it also “by right of a direct inheritance from a series of incarnations and æons of suffering and failures.” At this point we invariably feel the contrast, the biological “resistance of environments.” At this point it is still possible to choose between either attitudes—to turn the eyes back, or to enter the Arcadia of half-theoretical and half-practical occultism or mysticism, without incurring heavy consequences in our future karma, provided that “while turning their backs on the narrow gate,” the “affrighted Western

candidates" are not "dragged by their desire for the Occult" one step in the direction of the "wide Gate of the Occult Arts."

But at another appointed moment, after some strong, definite, free effort of our general will to serve, we find dropping in our inner consciousness another particular knowledge of the same aprioristic and mathematical character as the first we had gained, only this time it is diffused in every aspect of our consciousness. To borrow a comparison from positive psychology, there is not any more an insoluble piece of metal anywhere in the waters of the consciousness but becomes when dropped in it a substance of a very high degree of solubility, and it modifies permanently the whole mass.

Such a fact marks the point when in higher worlds of consciousness, we have put ourselves by our own free wills in immediate relationship with our Master. Since that moment only one real failure, we are told, is possible for us, namely the failure *to will and to try further*. And such failure is a very heavy one, involving as it does, not only our lower mind but our spiritual essence even to the will.

How, then, are we to translate all that into practical activity—into methods of work? Must we abandon family and life in the world? No; nothing of that. On the contrary, such a course, springing only from a distorted conception of duty, could only result in adding greatly to our store of unexhausted and hindering karma. We must simply direct our efforts in life so that our personality may be gradually replaced by the model of ourselves that He, the Master, has al-



ready worked out with His will and power, to be realized by the ego sometime in his chain of earthly existences.

Of course we may fail in action, but it is the effort of trying after every failure which counts for progress and not the impossibility of further failure. But we must abandon the idea that we may make any real progress by lending our realized divinity to things in life which in the world of existence—not of course in their cosmic essence—are now and forever surpassed by our new position in the universe as His pledged servers.

On the other hand we must be on our guard never to attribute to Him in our aspirations our still very limited and imperfect power of worldly vision. Since we "know" Him in our heart, be the mystic or the occult our line of spiritual evolution, we must begin to live the Reality of Renunciation, and first of all, make renunciation of our own desire of service itself.

No matter how earnest we are, we must not forget that we are very, very far from His knowledge and His power of judgment about the immediate necessities of His work. We see every day that what seems immensely important to a child may be a mere trifle to us. The Master, as a good parent, may lovingly indulge us in our play; but when we have pledged ourselves to work for Him we must act as good children who put aside their game to attend their school duties at the proper moment. It is only by raising our consciousness as much as we can to His standard that we can make ourselves channels for His energy and instruments for His service,

and not by measuring the possibilities of our work for Him according to the standard of our physical world knowledge and physical world realization of the needs of the world.

The time comes when we must listen for the faintest whisperings of His orders in the midst of the fight; the orders which may entirely opposite to what the ordinary and natural course of our karma would seem properly to assign as the ideal duty, or dharma, for our present incarnation. It is in such a sense that I believe the Chief Officer of our *Legion* told us so many times that "the occult life is full of contradictions." And similarly, concerning occult training, he often repeated that it might be that a certain work which the Master asks from us now, requires that grade of consciousness that we should normally have only in a future incarnation. It might be that by giving our pledge to Him, we have placed ourselves before two—and only two—possibilities of this present existence: namely, either to live it entirely in terms of a future incarnation, or to fail utterly in our sacred aim.

If we consider closely what we know of the lives of our great leaders and teachers, such as H. P. B., Mrs. Besant and Mr. Leadbeater, can we not see that they have, by the efforts of their marvellous will to serve, changed in the most tremendous manner both their dharma and, consequently, their karma? Only, when we speak of "changing" our karma, we must always understand it in terms of equivalence, as we would in the perfect principle of the Pythagorean theorem. As a matter of fact, to live partially or totally in terms of a future incarnation does not mean



that we jump through a more or less wide gulf, but that we condense in a tremendous rush of force, under enormous pressure, the quiet stream intended normally to run slowly and through few irregularities of ground for each of its many miles of course. Thus Achilles was given liberty at a critical moment to choose between a glorious but brief incarnation or a long but common one.

This does not mean that we must make our lives artificially hard, in order to gain the confidence or approval of our Master or to make progress in His work. It means that we must listen seriously at a certain moment in our lives and to bring to our own inner consciousness the order of the Master which our real Self has known directly; and we must also not fail to listen to any confirmation of such an order, which sometimes asserts itself through the authority of the one whom we know at that given moment to be and forever to remain the representative of the Master to us. It is such a direct and intimate knowledge that the Catholic Church calls "vocation," and in its true appreciation or misrepresentation to one's self lies the spiritual beauty of the principles of religious "ordaining" or the terrible dangers of its being bestowed untimely and through external ritual only.

Here, then, is the true foundation of sacrifice, which is not indeed the liberation from our karma, but rather the taking of the responsibility of it in our consciousness awakened by the baptismal fire of the first recognition of our effort by the Masters: for, says the Christ, (John, 15:5): "Without me ye can do nothing."

*Luigi Alfieri.*

*THE COMING SUB-RACE*

Mr. Leadbeater, one of the highest of our authorities on reincarnation and human evolution, recently delivered four lectures in Australia, in which he dealt with the subject of a new race of men which is even now beginning to appear in the newer countries of the world, such as America, Australia and New Zealand.

Explaining the larger and lesser races, the speaker said that "human evolution proceeds by means of what we call races and sub-races. When we speak of root-races we mean such gigantic divisions of humanity as the Lemurian, the Atlantean and the Aryan Races; when we speak of sub-races we mean sub-divisions of these, but still very large bodies of men, which in turn are divided into nations, and what we call branch-races. . a new sub-race is now due in the world; it has already commenced in the United States of America. . the American Bureau of Ethnology has recognised the fact that this new race is rising in their midst, that there is coming into existence in that mighty country a type of men which in various points differs from any race at present existing. The exact points of difference are largely in head measurements, in the proportion of the different parts of the body, and so on—in all the characteristics by which ethnologists discriminate between the different races. They are tabulating the particulars of this new and distinctly American race."

"In America there are so many different races that patriotism as we have known it in the older countries of Europe is only just beginning defi-



nitely to exist. In earlier days there was patriotism of State rather than of country, but gradually the whole people is welding itself into one mighty race, and the very fact that a new type is arising, a new body to express this new variety of soul, will tend more than anything else to bind the country into one, as by degrees the members of this new race are born."

"There is a double evolution. Remember, we hold this doctrine of reincarnation; we hold that the soul takes many bodies, first one and then another; that he takes these different bodies in order to learn certain lessons through each of them. We hold that the soul passes from one race to another in order that he may be finer, more perfectly rounded, and may have a reasonable development of all necessary characteristics; but he acquires these one by one. So it might well be that a soul be born in one race in order to develop courage, and then in another in order to cultivate his intellect. These qualities and many more must be present in the perfect man, and we find that in many cases not only one life, but several lives, may be necessary in order to drill the qualities into a man's nature. It is not a question of acquiring some exterior polish; it is a question of building into the very nature of the man such a characteristic, say, as the power of love. It is not much that can be done in one short life to change the whole character of a man—to make (for example) a miser into a generous man. You can see at once that that would be impossible in one life, but it would be by no means impossible if he had many lives stretching before him. The soul evolves by taking

different types of bodies; he takes a body and learns a certain lesson in one place; he lays aside that body and he goes into some other part of the world altogether, and takes a new body there to learn new lessons.

“But, besides that, there is the more generally recognised material evolution. We have better bodies now in many ways than men had thousands or millions of years ago. If you want to understand this past history of man at all, you must brace yourself up to face the existence of humanity for many millions of years. Orthodox talk on such subjects allows man to have lived on earth only a few thousand years, but they are gradually pushing back the date until now they are prepared to believe that high civilisations existed eight thousand years before the days of Christ, and they are inclined to agree that something preceded even that. We in theosophy hold that there has been a much longer period than they have yet ventured to suggest. Although history seems to fail us at about that time, geologists require eras which can only be described as tremendous for their processes and they now and again disconcert the rest of the scientists with their data. We say that there is an evolution of the bodies as well as of the souls—that the bodies must grow better because the souls are advancing, and they need a better class of vehicle. Millions of years ago there were, no doubt, a great many savages in the world; there are plenty yet, as we are now finding over in Europe; but, for all that, the world is evolving. We are in many ways in advance of the older though mighty civilisations; not in every respect,—in



those old days they knew some things which have since been lost, which we have not yet re-discovered. Do not have any doubt as to that. But on the whole the general level of humanity is higher now than it was in those older days, higher than it was even in the mighty civilisations of Greece and Rome; the average level is higher; there were some individuals then quite as high in every way spiritually and morally as any individual is now, but the general level is gradually advancing.

“Each of these races has its own characteristics. The great root-races are concerned with a development of the different bodies or vehicles of man. Nearly all that you read in books upon ethnology is the development of the Aryan race and of the great Atlantean race which preceded it; but there was another before that to which the name of Lemurian has been given. That third great root-race, called the Lemurian, was concerned with the development of the physical body. The Atlantean race which succeeded it was principally concerned with the development of the astral body. The great Aryan race to which we belong is concerned principally with the mental body—what you call the mind. Each of these great races predominates in the world for millions of years; but they run concurrently to this extent, that one begins before the other has finished; so that, although the Aryan race now rules nearly all the world, there are still vast numbers who clearly belong to the Atlantean race, and some few who belong to the race even before that. There are strong traces of Lemurian blood in some of the most backward savages.

“In each of these root-races there are seven sub-races; each sub-race is quite definitely a part of its root-race, and it is employed in doing the work of that root-race, but it colors that work with its own special characteristic. Take our present Aryan race, which is concerned with the development of mentality. The fourth sub-race of that fifth root-race was concerned with that mentality as it was conditioned by the astral body—that is to say, by passions and emotions; and for that reason some of the most wonderful poetry and art in the world was produced by that race. We all of us belong to the fifth sub-race of the fifth root-race, and so we are emphasising the evolution of mentality; hence the wonderful progress which modern science has made in the last hundred years, the tremendous developments which have changed the world. Some of you are old enough to remember a condition of affairs which made it in reality a different world from that in which we live now. In the last hundred years the most marvellous scientific advances have taken place. That is the result of this fifth root-race which has devoted itself especially to the cultivation of intellect, accentuated by the fact that this is its fifth sub-race.

“This next sub-race which is coming is still a sub-race of the Aryan, and therefore it will still be developing mentality; but it will be developing it from the point of view (and by the aid) of the next faculty—that is, intuition. So from this new sub-race we may expect wonderful mental development, but along rather different lines. We have been devoting ourselves very success-



fully to analysis; most of our epoch-making discoveries have been made by analysis of the inconceivably minute. The discoveries of the future will perhaps be more along the line of synthesis; we shall begin to get wide, sweeping views that relate a number of lines of research that hitherto have been supposed to be quite separate; we shall begin to see the reason for things as a great whole. So that one may suppose that there will be wonderful discoveries linking up these different lines of research; that may be the special work of the sixth sub-race, at the dawning of which we now assist."

"The principle which underlies all progress appears to be that of cyclic movements. Everything goes in impulses; it moves forward, works for a while, draws back again and then goes forth again. The life of man himself is the nearest example of it: man as a soul comes down into incarnation; he takes a body, and through that he learns certain lessons, he develops certain qualities, and then he goes back again into himself in order to digest the result of his efforts, in order to assimilate those qualities and to strengthen those powers. Then he comes out again and once more shows himself through matter, in order that a fresh set of qualities may be developed.

"What is true of the life of man is equally true of the life of a nation: just as a man has his youth, his period of maturity and success, and then his decline, so has a nation its period of youth, the time when it flourishes, when all its great work in the world is done, and then after that a period of decay when the nation is

gradually dying out from its position of great importance. History shows us that that is what happened with all the great civilisations. If you will follow the story of any of them—the great Persian rule, the great Greek system, or the Roman Empire (in many ways the greatest of all)—you will find that is true of all of them. What happened to these civilisations of old must in the nature of things happen to our own civilisation. It is well we should bear that in mind.”

“So history teaches us this lesson, that although, one after another, the mighty and splendid civilisations pass away, their passing away is for the ultimate good of the world as a whole. I am not for a moment putting before you any idea of the progress of humanity from the point of view that we individually must sacrifice everything to the good of a posterity which, after all, has done nothing for *us*; but, holding as I do, the doctrine of reincarnation, I say to you, that *we* come back again, the same souls come back again, to find a better environment waiting them, and that is the fundamental reason for all this cyclical movement of progress. The soul grows, and as he grows, his vehicle, the body, to some extent grows along with him. You can change a body to a certain extent, but not beyond that limit, and if a man makes rapid progress, he presently reaches a stage where it is better that he should take a more developed body to suit his more developed soul. That is the reason for reincarnation—that, and the consideration that each body is intended for the learning of certain lessons and the development of certain qualities.

“The same idea must be applied to the growth,



the maturity and the decay of nations. What, after all, is a nation? If you do not understand the idea of reincarnation, if you think of yourself as born only once, then you say: 'This is my nation; I belong to this; I could not possibly belong to any other.' But if you understand that you, the soul, take many successive bodies, you will say:

" 'This is my nation now for the moment; I am part of it; I must fight for it, work for it; but I have belonged to other nations in the past; I shall belong to others in the future; I am here for a certain definite purpose; let me discover what it is and try to carry out the plan, because I know that the plan is for man's ultimate good, for the advantage of humanity as a whole.'

"And so you begin to see why nations have a history like that of an individual man. A particular nation exists to develop in its people certain qualities; but only a certain number of egos or souls are ready to come into those bodies, and acquire those qualities. So at last there comes a time when all these who are ready now to learn that particular lesson, have learned it; there are no more souls needing that environment, and therefore that race begins to die out. It is usually the birth-rate that falls. You can see that happening in some countries of the world even now. You know that certain countries are progressing in this respect, and you will see that other countries with exactly the same opportunities are not increasing in population in the same way. There are those where the population is decreasing instead of increasing, and (other things being equal) it means that the particular

qualities that they have been intended to develop are no longer needed in that form; so the race is dying out.

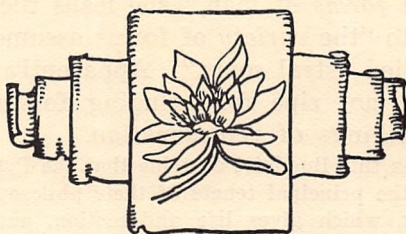
"A race exists not for its own sake, but for the sake of the souls who are passing through it; and if you get that idea into your mind, and if you also understand that souls pass in succession through all these different types of races, you will see no reason to regret the disappearance of the wonderful Greek art or the Roman regularity and order; because we are the very people, after all, who made these mighty civilisations; we who are now born in these races to develop other qualities, have already passed through those and learnt our lessons, and therefore we do not need them any more, and so the races fade out.

"You need not regret the passing away of a civilisation, however magnificent, because the souls that made it magnificent will return again and make another one still more magnificent. The whole thing is progress. Take the case of ancient Peru. The life of that nation was wonderfully mapped out. There was no poverty and no crime; there was only one punishment by law, and that was expulsion from the community. Wonderful though that was, it did not encourage man's initiative. If you are to make useful, powerful men, you must give them the opportunity of exercising their free will; they will use it wrongly part of the time, but still there must be that free will; the moment you give it to them, a state such as that of ancient Peru is impossible. You can no longer drive men your own way, because you are giving them their free will, and they must learn how to use it. The Deity recog-



nises, I think, that in using our free will we must use it wrongly at times. In Peru they were simply driven the right way like sheep; that does not make great spiritual powers; it may make good and docile men, but not powers who can control empires in the future, which is the object of all this."

*From "The Herald of the Star."  
(To be continued)*



## TWO SHIPS

One ship goes East and another goes West,  
By the self same wind that blows.  
'T is the set of the sail and not the gale  
That determines the way they go.

Like the winds of the sea are the ways of Fate  
As we voyage along through life,  
It is the set of the Soul that decides the goal,  
And not the calm or the strife.

*Masonic Magazine.*

## REINCARNATION IN "ISIS UNVEILED"

(Continued from page 211)

In the following paragraphs H. P. B. does not so much state her own views but rather those of Buddhist philosophy, compared with those of other ancient systems of thought. It seems almost as if she intentionally refrained from writing more about reincarnation, which she undoubtedly must have known as a fundamental teaching of Buddhism. Thus, after having written of the "*external forms of man*," she leads the reader's thought to "*the variety of forms assumed by the disembodied astral souls*." Apparently the time was then not ripe for bringing forward more exact teachings of reincarnation.

It is upon this Buddhist doctrine that the Pythagoreans grounded the principal tenets of their philosophy. "Can that spirit, which gives life and motion, and partakes of the nature of light, be reduced to non-entity?" they ask. "Can that sensitive spirit in brutes which exercises memory, one of the rational faculties, die, and become nothing?" And Whitelock Bulstrode, in his able defense of Pythagoras, expounds this doctrine by adding: "If you say, they (the brutes) breathe their spirits into the air, and there vanish, that is all I contend for. The air, indeed, is the proper place to receive them, being, according to Laertius, full of souls; and, according to Epicurus, full of atoms, the principles of all things; for even this place wherein we walk and birds fly has so much of a spiritual nature, that it is invisible, and, therefore, may well be the receiver of forms, since the forms of all bodies are so; we can only see and hear its effects; the air itself is too fine, and above the capacity of the age. What then is the ether in the region above, and what are the influences or forms that descend from thence?" The *spirits* of creatures, the Pythagoreans hold, who are emanations of the most sublimated portions of ether, emanations, BREATHS, but



*not forms.* Ether is incorruptible, all philosophers agree in that; and what is incorruptible *is so far from being annihilated* when it gets rid of the *form*, that it lays a good claim to IMMORTALITY. "But what is that which has no body, no *form*; which is imponderable, invisible and indivisible; that which exists and yet *is not*?" ask the Buddhists. "It is Nirvana," is the answer. It is NOTHING, not a region, but rather a state. When once Nirvana is reached, man is exempt from the effects of the "four truths"; for an effect can only be produced through a certain cause, and every cause is *annihilated* in this state.

These "four truths" are the foundation of the whole Buddhist doctrine of Nirvana. They are, says the book of *Pradjñā Pâramitâ*, ("Perfection of Wisdom"): 1. The existence of pain. 2. The production of pain. 3. The annihilation of pain. 4. The way to the annihilation of pain. What is the source of pain?—Existence. Birth existing, decrepitude and death ensue; for wherever there is a form, there is a *cause* for pain and suffering. *Spirit* alone has no form, and therefore *cannot be said to exist*. Whenever man (the ethereal, inner man) reaches that point when he becomes utterly spiritual, hence, formless, he has reached a state of perfect bliss. MAN as an objective being becomes annihilated, but the spiritual entity with its subjective life, will live for ever, for spirit is incorruptible and immortal.

It is by the spirit of the teachings of both Buddha and Pythagoras, that we can so easily recognize the identity of their doctrines. The all-pervading, universal soul, the *Anima Mundi*, is Nirvana; and Buddha, as a generic name, is the anthropomorphized *monad* of Pythagoras. When resting in Nirvana, the final bliss, Buddha is the silent monad, dwelling in darkness and silence; he is also the formless Brahm, the sublime but *unknowable* Deity, which pervades invisibly the whole universe. Whenever it is manifested, desiring to impress itself upon humanity in a shape intelligent to our intellect, whether we call it an *avatar*, or a King Messiah, or a *permutation* of Divine Spirit, *Logos*, *Christos*, it is all one and the same thing. In each case it is "the Father" who is in the *Son*, and the *Son* in "the Father."

The immortal spirit overshadows the mortal man. It enters into him, and, pervading his whole being, makes of him a god, who descends into his earthly tabernacle. Every man may become a Buddha, says the doctrine. And so throughout the interminable series of ages we find now and then men who more or less succeed in *uniting* themselves "with God," as the expression goes, with their *own spirit*, as we ought to translate. The Buddhists call such men *Arhat*. An Arhat is next to a Buddha, and none is equal to him either in *infused* science, or *miraculous* powers. Certain fakirs demonstrate the theory well in practice, as Jacolliot has proved.

Even the so-called *fabulous* narratives of certain Buddhistical books, when stripped of their allegorical meaning, are found to be the secret doctrines taught by Pythagoras. In the Pali Books called the *Jâtakas*, are given the 550 incarnations or metempsychoses of Buddha. They narrate how he has appeared in every form of animal life, and animated every sentient being on earth, from infinitesimal insect to the bird, the beast, and finally man, the microscopic image of God on earth. Must this be taken *literally*; is it intended as a description of the *actual* transformations and existence of one and the same individual immortal, divine spirit, which by turns has animated every kind of sentient being? Ought we not rather to understand, with Buddhist metaphysicians, that though the individual human spirits are numberless, collectively they are one, as every drop of water drawn out of the ocean, metaphorically speaking, may have an individual existence and still be one with the rest of the drops going to form that ocean; for each human spirit is a scintilla of the one all-pervading light? That this divine spirit animates the flower, the particle of granite on the mountain side, the lion, the man? Egyptian Hierophants, like the Brahmans, and the Buddhists of the East, and some Greek philosophers, maintained originally that the same spirit that animates the particle of dust, lurking latent in it, animates man, manifesting itself in him in its highest state of activity. The doctrine, also, of a gradual refusion of the human *soul* into the essence of the primeval parent spirit, was universal at one time. But this doctrine never implied



annihilation of the higher spiritual *ego*—only the dispersion of the *external forms* of man, after his terrestrial death, as well as during his abode on earth. Who is better fitted to impart to us the mysteries of after-death, so erroneously thought impenetrable, than those men who having, through self-discipline and purity of life and purpose, succeeded in uniting themselves with their "God," were afforded *some* glimpses, however imperfect, of the great truth? And these seers tell us strange stories about the *variety* of forms assumed by disembodied astral souls; forms of which each one is a spiritual though concrete reflection of the abstract state of the mind, and thoughts of the once living man.

To accuse Buddhistical philosophy of rejecting a Supreme Being—God, and the soul's immortality, of atheism, in short, on the ground that according to their doctrines, Nirvana means *annihilation*, and *Svabhâvât* is *NOT a person*, but *nothing*, is simply absurd. The En (or Ayîn) of the Jewish En-Soph, also means *nihil* or *nothing*, that which is not (*quo ad nos*); but no one has ever ventured to twit the Jews with atheism. In both cases the real meaning of the term *nothing* carries with it the idea that God is *not a thing*, not a concrete or visible Being to which a name expressive of *any* object known to us on earth may be applied with propriety. (I, 289-292).

In the next chapter, H. P. B. refers to the Egyptian teachings of spiritual evolution, which were known to Pythagoras and Plato and other Greek philosophers. Plato, in one of his books, mentions the 3,000 year reincarnation cycle of the soul's evolution. H. P. B. calls attention to the fact that

"... this philosophy of cycles, which was allegorized by the Egyptian Hierophants in the "circle of necessity," explains at the same time the allegory of the "Fall of man." According to the Arabian descriptions, each of the seven chambers of the Pyramids—those grandest of all cosmic symbols—was known by the name of a planet. The peculiar architecture of the Pyramids shows in itself the drift of the metaphysical thought of their builders.

The apex is lost in the clear blue sky of the land of the Pharaohs, and typifies the primordial point lost in the unseen universe from whence started the first race of the spiritual prototypes of man. Each mummy, from the moment that it was embalmed, lost its physical individuality in one sense; it symbolized the human race. Placed in such a way as was best calculated to aid the exit of the "soul," the latter had to pass through the seven planetary chambers before it made its exit through the symbolical apex. Each chamber typified, at the same time, one of the seven spheres, and one of the seven higher types of physico-spiritual humanity alleged to be above our own. Every 3,000 years, the soul, representative of its race, had to return to its primal point of departure before it underwent another evolution into a more perfected spiritual and physical transformation. We must go deep into the abstruse metaphysics of Oriental mysticism before we can realize fully the infinitude of the subjects that were embraced at one sweep by the majestic thought of its exponents. (I, 296-297).

In an exposition of the kabalistic philosophy, drawn chiefly from the *Codex Nazareus*, there occur the following striking paragraphs, in which reincarnation is clearly implied:

When the Central Invisible (the Lord Ferho) saw the efforts of the divine *Scintilla* [the human spirit], unwilling to be dragged lower down into the degradation of matter, he permitted it to shoot out from itself a *monad*, over which, attached to it as by the finest thread, the Divine *Scintilla* (the soul) had to watch during its ceaseless peregrinations from one form to another. Thus the monad was shot down into the first form of matter and became encased in stone; then, in course of time, through the combined efforts of *living fire* and *living water*, both of which shone their *reflection* upon the stone, the monad crept out of its prison to sunlight as a lichen. From change to change it went higher and higher; the monad, with every new transformation, borrowing more of the radiance of its parent, *Scintilla*, which approached it nearer at every transmigration.



For "the First Cause, had willed it to proceed in this order"; and destined it to creep on higher until its physical form became once more the Adam of dust, shaped in the image of the Adam Kadmon. Before undergoing its last earthly transformation, the external covering of the monad, from the moment of its conception as an embryo, passes in turn, once more, through the phases of the several kingdoms. In its fluidic prison it assumes a vague resemblance at various periods of the gestation to plant, reptile, bird, and animal, until it becomes a human embryo. At the birth of the future man, the monad, radiating with all the glory of its immortal parent which watches it from the seventh sphere, becomes *senseless*. It loses all recollection of the past, and returns to consciousness but gradually, when the instinct of childhood gives way to reason and intelligence. After the separation between the life-principle (astral spirit) and the body takes place, the liberated soul—Monad—exultingly rejoins the mother and father spirit, the radiant Augoeides, and the two, merged into one, forever form, with a glory proportioned to the spiritual purity of the past earth-life, the Adam who has completed the circle of necessity, and is freed from the last vestige of its physical encasement. Henceforth, growing more and more radiant at each step of his upward progress, he mounts the shining path that ends at the point from which he started around the GRAND CYCLE. (I, 302-303).

A Student.

(To be continued)



## REINCARNATION AND KARMA\*

*In Questions and Answers*

*What does Reincarnation mean?*

It means that we live on earth not once, but many times.

*Do we have the same bodies each time?*

No; each time we come to earth we have new bodies, fitted to our new conditions.

*Are not the conditions the same each time?*

No; they differ in each incarnation.

*Why do they thus differ?*

To give us an opportunity of learning all the lessons that life can teach us.

*Are all our lives bright and happy?*

No; some lives are happy, and some are sad; some are peaceful lives, and others filled with suffering.

*Why should some lives be filled with sadness and suffering?*

Because it is by suffering that we learn sympathy and kindness.

*Are these the only things we learn?*

No; we learn to be charitable in our judgment; tolerant in our opinions; to control our bodies, instead of being controlled by them; and many other things.

*Then we were not always the same as we are now?*

No; we were very much less developed, and shall be very much higher.

*How did we begin our human incarnations?*

We began at the very bottom, with the life of the lowest savage.

*And when will they end?*

When we become divine like the Lord Christ or the Lord Buddha.

*Were these the only divine men?*

No; there were many before them.

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\* A leaflet published by the *Karma and Reincarnation Legion* in New Zealand.



*Then we are born only for the purpose of learning lessons?*

Yes; each life is like a day at school; then we return home, and prepare for the next day.

*We have then been many persons?*

Yes; and shall be many more.

*How can we at the same time be one, and also be many?*

Because the person is only the body, and we are not the body.

*What, then, are we?*

We are spiritual individuals, and the body is our garment, which we put off when we are done with it, or when it is worn out.

*If we have lived other lives, why don't we remember them?*

Because we have a different body and a different brain each time. The brain cannot remember what it never experienced.

*But why should we learn all these lessons if we do not remember them?*

The individual does remember, and everything he has learned becomes part of the consciousness of the soul.

*Will the time ever come when we do remember?*

Yes; when we are so advanced that we can lift our consciousness out of the physical.

*Are there any persons who can do this?*

Yes; there are some who can.

*What do we call this process of learning through many incarnations?*

We call it evolution, the evolution of the soul.

*Have we ourselves anything to do with the kind given us in each incarnation?*

We get each time what our actions in past lives give us to.

*What do we call the law which determines this?*  
We call it the law of Karma.

*What do we mean by the law of Karma?*

We mean the law which causes us to reap just what we have sown.

*Give another name for this law.*

The law of cause and effect.

*Who sets this law in motion?*

We do ourselves.

*In what way?*

By our thoughts and actions. If we think thoughts of love and do deeds of kindness, we sow seeds which will grow up and bring us love and kindness. Unkind thoughts and actions will bear the fruit of hatred and unhappiness.

*What, then, is the cause if we are suffering and unhappy?*

Our own wrong actions in the past.

*What do you mean by the past?*

I mean past incarnations.

*Does not God, then, visit us with affliction?*

No we suffer because we break His law.

*What do we learn through this suffering?*

To be kind, loving and sympathetic, and to live in accordance with God's law.

*What are we doing in our present life?*

Two things: reaping the result of past actions, and by present actions building the conditions of the future.

*How can we make these conditions good?*

By right thoughts, desires and actions.

*What results will these have?*

Thoughts will make character.

Desires will make opportunities.

Actions will make environment.

*Are these good conditions given us, so that we may have easier and pleasanter lives?*

No; but that we may be better able to help others.

*Is it wrong, then, to enjoy ourselves?*

Oh no; but the highest happiness consist good. That will give us more pleasure than our wishes.

*If that gives us more pleasure indulging ourselves?*

Not in the same way, for doing good gives an unselfish pleasure; the ot



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No; but that we may be better able to help others.

*Is it wrong, then, to enjoy ourselves?*

Oh no; but the highest happiness consists in doing good. That will give us more pleasure than to indulge our wishes.

*If that gives us more pleasure, are we not still indulging ourselves?*

Not in the same way, for doing good and helping others gives an unselfish pleasure; the other is purely selfish.



*How long must we incarnate under this law?*

Until we become perfect divine men.

*Can we hasten this process?*

Yes.

*In what way?*

By beginning now to change hatred into love, anger into patience, and trying to overcome our faults the best we can.

*Is this easy?*

No; it is very hard; but we can always keep on trying.

*Can we fail in our efforts?*

No.

*Why not?*

Because the only failure consists in ceasing to try.

### FIELD NOTES

A number of members have kindly declared themselves willing to correspond with prisoners and to help them in their study of reincarnation and karma. At present the needs are supplied, but as others arise, they will be assigned to these various members in turn.

It would be well for members and friends who wish to furnish reading matter to prisoners, to write to the wardens of their state penal institutions, asking them whether bound volumes of REINCARNATION or a current subscription would not be acceptable to their men. In such cases a sample copy may be sent for inspection.

There are many subscribers to this magazine who have not sent in applications for membership in the *Legion*. Any one who is sufficiently interested to read REINCARNATION is fully entitled to become a member, if he feels in sympathy with these teachings. Remember, one need not even be a believer in karma and reincarnation in order to enroll in the *Legion*. It is hoped that many subscribers will apply for regular membership.

Emblems for members are to be had in sterling silver. The pins, with safety locks are fifty cents each; while pendants, with ring, are twenty-five cents each.

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